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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1808
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RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI IMMEDIATE 9853
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO IMMEDIATE 4712
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RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
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C O N F I D E N T I A L KATHMANDU 001495

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [NP](#)
SUBJECT: CABINET EXPANSION INCLUDES LEFTIST AS DEPUTY PRIME
MINISTER

REF: KATHMANDU

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Larry Schwartz, Reasons, 1.4 (b/d).

Cabinet Expands by Three, Adding Second Deputy Prime Minister

11. (SBU) Prime Minister GP Koirala named three additional ministers to his Cabinet June 11, including Amik Sherchan, head of the extreme left People's Front Nepal (PFN), as Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Health and Population. Koirala also appointed Hridayesh Tripathi, General Secretary of Nepal Sadbhavana Party - Ananda Devi (NSP-A), as Minister for Industry, Commerce and Supplies. Gyanendra Bahadur Karki, who is on the Central Working Committee of the Nepali Congress-Democratic party (NC-D) but not a Member of Parliament, will become State Minister for Water Resources in place of NC-D Deputy Speaker of Parliament Chitra Lekha Yadav, who had turned down the post. The expansion brings PFN and NSP-A, both members of the seven-party alliance, into the government. The only remaining member of the seven-party alliance not represented in the Council of Ministers is Nepal Workers and Peasants Party (a party based in Bhaktapur in Kathmandu Valley that holds one seat in Parliament.

For Unity, and To Placate the Maoists?

12. (C) Sherchan had long been demanding a Deputy PM appointment as a reward for his party's role in bringing the Maoists to the negotiating table. Kashinath Adhikari, Central Committee Member of CPN-UML, expressed to us his disappointment over Sherchan's appointment as a second Deputy PM. Adhikari worried that it would not send a positive message to the people who would view the seven-party alliance as jostling for power and posts. Subodh Pyukarel head of local human rights NGO INSEC, criticized PM Koirala for making such an appointment when PFN had split and Sherchan's faction only had three MPs, including Sherchan.

Sherchan Regarded as a Difficult Personality

13. (C) The Embassy has not had much contact with Sherchan. Others view him as being short-tempered, illogical and

difficult. Sherchan has sometimes been critical of the seven-party alliance's government. His English is very weak. Lilimani Pokharel, PFN's vice-president, recommended using an interpreter in discussions with Sherchan, who spoke only broken English. Sherchan, who is in his mid-60's has the equivalent of an American high school degree. He has been active in politics since his school days. He was born in Myagdi District and his family migrated to Chitwan District. He is married and has three sons and one daughter.

Comment

¶4. (C) The seven-party alliance is trying to establish a functioning government even while Maoists and others are demanding that the government's only role is to work for peace and to prepare for a constituent assembly. The alliance is in a delicate position. The parties recognize the importance of strengthening their position to negotiate with the Maoists, alliance participants also want credit - and power -- even while most of the public still suspects the political parties are venal and power-hungry. It is unclear whether Sherchan's appointment as a second Deputy PM will improve the government's position vis-a-vis the Maoists or whether it reflects political jockeying for power. That said, the seven-party alliance continues for now.
SCHWARTZ